

Dear Commissioners:

Don't prevent states from fixing my cell phone problems. I am writing to oppose CG Docket No. 04-208 and WT Docket No. 05-194, which will unjustly take away the authority of states to tackle problems with cell phone service, including abusive cancellation penalties. Worse, the proposal will put in place a weak set of cell phone company-endorsed rules that offer no improvements in service or enforcement.

It's time to adopt policies that force cell phone companies to improve the level of service they provide to consumers. The public should not have to put up with deceptive business practices; the way some cell phone bills are presented, seems designed mainly to bilk more money out of customers for unnecessary or duplicate add-ons and unknowable, unbudgeted-for expenses. Asked what the bottom line monthly bill would be, only to be given a vague quoted response as to the "package" cost, which did not include a number of other "lawful" charges, which should be part of the cell company's cost of doing business, not passed on to consumers as an extra charge. If one wants to cancel because it wasn't what was expected, the cancellation charge is so outrageously high, that the cell company knows customers are not likely to do that until the ridiculously long contract period is over... and sometimes the phone unit barely lasts that long, so customers get lured into getting a "free" phone, only to find that in accepting it, they are locked into another multi-year agreement, with another ridiculous cancellation fee, and hidden or vague excess charges. The phone units themselves are not worth the regular prices being charged without the discount offered for signing a multiyear contract, since mostly they don't last much past the contract. How can this not be a form of subtle fraud?

Although CG Docket No. 04-208 purports to address consumer frustration with confusing cell phone bills, hidden fees and misleading advertising, the proposal does little for consumers. In the name of helping us, the agency is proposing to block states from passing their own pro-consumer laws. As bad, WT Docket No. 05-194 would bar state courts from enforcing state law when it comes to unfair and abusive cell phone contracts. That's going too far.

States are responding to consumer complaints. Don't stop them! And don't give in to adopting weak, industry-drafted rules in their place. The FCC should stand up to the cell phone industry, and respect states rights and strong consumer protections.

Sincerely,
Victoria R Pettit